

TRANSCRIPT OF ROADLESS RULE
ANILCA SUBSISTENCE PUBLIC HEARING

HAINES, ALASKA
12/7/2019

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (Haines, Alaska - 12/7/2019)

3 (On record)

4 MR. SHERMAN: All right. I want to thank
5 everyone for attending tonight's public meeting. This
6 is an opportunity for you to provide input to the
7 proposed Alaska Roadless Rule and corresponding draft
8 environmental impact statement.

9 Specifically the Forest Service is seeking your
10 comment on a proposed rule on how roadless areas in
11 Alaska and the Tongass National Forest will be managed
12 in the future. On October 18, 2019 the Notice of
13 Proposed Rulemaking was published in the Federal
14 Register and indicated a preferred Alternative 6
15 exemption of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule
16 applied to the Tongass National Forest.

17 An exemption would remove all regulatory
18 restrictions currently in place by the 2001 Roadless
19 Rule on the Tongass National Forest. The Forest
20 Service is accepting comments on this proposed rule
21 until December 17, 2019. Today is your opportunity to
22 provide oral and/or written comments.

23 My name is Frank Sherman, I'm the Deputy Forest
24 Supervisor on the Tongass National Forest. Today I'm
25 here to serve as the meeting facilitator, so my job is

1 to make sure that everyone here who would like to make
2 oral or written comments on the proposed rule is able
3 to do so.

4 The meeting has been scheduled to last until
5 4:10 in order to receive your comments. We'll be using
6 a digital voice recorders located on the table to
7 record your comments. Your voice recordings will then
8 be translated by a professional court reporter and
9 included in the project record for the Alaska Roadless
10 Rulemaking Project. Just as a side note, if you decide
11 to use your Native language, please repeat it in
12 English for the recording.

13 During this comment portion of the meeting we
14 will not be answering any questions, but allowing us
15 time to listen to and hear your comments. In addition
16 to today's meeting we'll be hosting additional public
17 meetings in communities around Southeast Alaska,
18 Anchorage and Washington, D.C.

19 In conjunction with those meetings we will
20 collect subsistence testimony at communities in
21 Southeast Alaska to include Ketchikan, Craig, Hydaburg,
22 Kasaan, Yakutat, Tenakee Springs, Wrangell, Gustavus,
23 Petersburg, Kake, Sitka, Angoon, Thorne Bay and
24 Skagway, Haines and Pelican Bay. The current schedule
25 of the meetings can be found on the Alaska Roadless

1 Rule website.

2 Because of the importance of your comments it
3 is necessary that we follow certain procedures during
4 this meeting. As you enter the meeting room, which is
5 here, you'll be asked to sign in which you all have
6 done. It is important that every person sign in so
7 that we have a complete record of all persons who
8 attended and participated in the meeting. If you plan
9 to make oral comments today, please be sure to indicate
10 it on the sign in sheets, so that's what these sheets
11 are here. Also if you are attending this meeting and
12 submitting comments on behalf of a group or an
13 organization, please indicate the name of the group or
14 entity that you represent. Let me emphasize that the
15 primary purpose of the public part of this meeting is
16 to receive information and comments from you on the
17 record. And we'll have ample time for each comment.
18 And I'll monitor it as we move through.

19 So when I call your name, please step forward
20 to the microphone, you can sit here or wherever you'd
21 like but as long as you can see the microphone and
22 please begin your presentation by stating your full
23 name and then spell it out for the recorder. If you're
24 affiliated with an organization or a group, please say
25 so. So that your comments are accurately captured,

1 please speak clearly and into the microphone. And if
2 you are called to speak and choose not to speak or
3 provide short comments, you're not able to like cede
4 your time to somebody else. But, again, I don't think
5 we're going to have that problem here, we've got seven
6 comments filled out here.

7 So I'd like to open the public hearing section
8 of this meeting. I have 2:14, it's the 7th of
9 December.

10 So the first speaker is Kip.....

11 MR. KERMOIAN: Kermoian.

12 MR. SHERMAN: Kermoian.

13 MR. KERMOIAN: Yeah.

14 MR. SHERMAN: So please come on up. And then
15 on deck is Eric Holle.

16 MR. HOLLE: Holle.

17 MR. SHERMAN: Holle, I'm sorry. Holle. So
18 please state your name and spell it for the recorder
19 please.

20 MR. KERMOIAN: My name is Kip Kermoian, K-I-P,
21 last name is K-E-R-M-O-I-A-N. And I would like to
22 express my interest in Secretary Perdue to select
23 Alternative 1, which is no action. I think the process
24 in evaluating each of these alternatives is terribly
25 flawed. In the Draft EIS you stated there's

1 essentially very little differences between each of
2 these alternatives. I think that's totally inaccurate.
3 To suggest that because we're cutting 46 -- how many
4 board feet is that, you can't say, okay, whatever,
5 okay, we're using a volume number and suggesting that
6 because we're cutting the same volume across the
7 Tongass that there'll be no detrimental impacts
8 essentially, that it's -- it's -- it's kind of a
9 neutral number. And as we all know based upon 46
10 million board feet -- as we know there's a lot of
11 diverse habitat and quality of habitat on the Tongass,
12 and so any roading in one area may have much more
13 detrimental impacts than roading into another. So I
14 think the process is entirely flawed, it needs to be
15 reevaluated.

16 As far as public comments, I think that the
17 weight of the people that live here should carry much
18 more significant weight than other concerns. The
19 people that live here are familiar with the economy,
20 their subsistence users like myself, fisheries, social,
21 cultural concerns that these people have, the pulse up
22 here, that live in Southeast, and I think that should
23 be a primary consideration.

24 So no action, Alternative 1.

25 Thank you. Thanks for coming.

1 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, sir.

2 MR. KERMOIAN: Yeah.

3 MR. SHERMAN: Eric, and on deck is Thomas Ely.

4 MR. ELY: Ely. Ely.

5 MR. SHERMAN: Ely, I'm sorry. Ely. Please
6 state your name and just spell it out, sir.

7 MR. HOLLE: My name is Eric Holle, E-R-I-C H-O-
8 L-L-E. I'm going to comment first, as far as my own
9 personal subsistence use, and then I will comment on
10 behalf of an organization.

11 As far as my own need for unroaded areas on the
12 Tongass, I have been a deer hunter in Alaska for 30
13 years. And, although, there isn't a lot of opportunity
14 for deer hunting right around Haines, areas in the
15 central part of the state -- central part of Southeast
16 Alaska are very important for myself and quite a lot of
17 other people who live in this town. I personally have
18 used areas from Sullivan Island down to many areas on
19 Chichagof Island for deer hunting, Yakobi Island, other
20 parts of Southeast. Same is true for sportfishing.
21 I've sportfished on Kuiu Island, South Baranof and most
22 other islands and part of the main land between South
23 Chatham Strait and Haines. Now, the U.S. Forest
24 Service is well aware of the impacts of clear-cutting
25 of old growth on deer and deer habitat. This is based

1 partly on the work of the Department of Fish and Game
2 biologist Matt Kerchoff and John Shane 30 or 40 years
3 ago, and also information that came up during the
4 revision of the 1989 Tongass Land Management Plan
5 during lawsuits regarding the archipelago wolf and more
6 recently in other consultation between the Fish and
7 Game Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the
8 Forest Service. So I won't belabor that too much. The
9 research is done, you're aware of it. Same thing is
10 true with impacts to fishery resources. I have a very
11 thick fat green book put out by USDA Forest Service
12 researchers from mid to late '80s, and it's called
13 something like the impacts of clear-cut logging on
14 fishery resources, Chamblerin was the editor, it was
15 Federal Forest Service researchers that did all the
16 work and I'm sure you're well aware of the impacts to
17 fisheries as well.

18 So for those reasons I, as a subsistence user,
19 support the no action alternative, and would like to
20 see you minimize additional clear-cutting.

21 Now, I'm also the Board president of Lynn Canal
22 Conservation and I'll make a few comments regarding
23 that group. We will submit detailed written comments
24 but I'll just make a few general comments while you're
25 here.

1 We have approximately 200 members. It varies
2 from year to year but about 200. Timber represents
3 less than one percent of the regional economy in
4 Southeast Alaska, and that is shrinking. And I, refer,
5 again, to a report that came out on October of 2019
6 that I mentioned in the question and answer period,
7 it's called, Cutting Our Losses, it's put out by a non-
8 partisan group, Taxpayers for Common Sense. In any way
9 you look at the figures, the Federal government is
10 losing a lot of money for every dollar they take in by
11 supporting this dying industry. There's no
12 justification for that. The Tongass has lost over \$600
13 million in the last 20 years. It looks even worse --
14 the next three years coming up you could lose 160 to
15 \$180 million. There's just no justification for doing
16 that.

17 Now, as far as carbon sequestration, National
18 Forests are really important for carbon sequestration
19 in this era of climate change. The Tongass is about
20 eight per -- represents about eight percent of that
21 sequestration. It's far more valuable to a state like
22 Alaska, which is getting very hard hit by climate
23 change already to maintain Forest cover, maintain
24 watershed protection, than to go in there and do below
25 cost timber sales, export unprocessed timber across the

1 sea. So why contribute to climate change when there's
2 very little demand and nobody's making any money from
3 it.

4 I'll also mention that our local economy here
5 is primarily based on tourism and fishing. I've
6 already mentioned that fishing depends on intact
7 watersheds and the Forest Service has ample research
8 showing that cutting old growth watersheds have severe
9 impacts to fisheries.

10 And I will finish with a general comment. I
11 would think the Forest Service should learn from
12 history. I would suggest they -- a book called, the
13 History of The World written by eminent historian
14 Arnold Toynbee, in which he identifies four common
15 factors in the decline and fall of civilizations
16 throughout the history of the world. One of those four
17 is deforestation.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, sir. Thomas and Josh
20 Grimm is up next.

21 MR. ELY: Thomas Ely, T-H-O-M-A-S E-L-Y. Today
22 in Madrid, Spain the world leaders are meeting to
23 address climate change, probably the greatest threat to
24 our planet and to our subsistence way of life in
25 Alaska. The Tongass Forest is a temperate rain Forest,

1 it plays a huge part in combatting climate change, and
2 that should be the most significant decision that the
3 Forest Service can make in its planning for the Forest,
4 is what the Forest does for the world, not what it will
5 do for a dying timber industry.

6 The Federal government has subsidized the
7 Tongass timber program for over 50 years and that's why
8 it was started, to create jobs in Alaska, but it's very
9 expensive to log trees in the Tongass now. And the
10 areas that aren't roaded are the most expensive to log
11 and so the Federal government would lose even more
12 money if they go into these roadless areas to log them.
13 So there's absolutely no -- it's a no win situation for
14 the public, for the government, or for the planet. So
15 I don't understand why the Forest Service is allowing
16 this political game to play out by a few people that
17 believe they can bring the hay day of logging to the
18 Tongass back when the Forest standing, its value far
19 exceeds that of logging any trees.

20 So I believe that all the trees that are
21 standing in the Tongass, the old growth timber needs to
22 stay the way it is. There is a secondary logging
23 industry that's developing now for small scale logging
24 with value added products that are used to build
25 things, not to be exported trees in the round overseas.

1 I think that's the best use of the Forest. And the
2 Forest Service was transitioning in that direction
3 during the last Administration, but now under our new
4 Administration, with Mr. Trump, we seem to be trying to
5 go back 40 or 50 years as far as resource development
6 goes. So this is purely a political game. It's rather
7 disheartening because the Roadless Rule has been
8 litigated in court and it's been ruled in favor of
9 standing, both for Alaska and around the country, and
10 it's just a waste of time and resources for everybody
11 involved to keep having to readdress this.

12 Also the areas that are left roaded -- roadless
13 are pristine areas of the Forest that should stay that
14 way for future generations to enjoy for the wildlife
15 and for tourism and other things, to appreciate what
16 the Forest has.

17 So I support the no action alternative, and I
18 think that will show in the public comments that most
19 people will support that. And I hope that the Forest
20 Service will make the right decision based on science
21 and not on a political decision.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, sir. Next up is Josh
24 Grimm and Jessica Plachta.

25 MS. PLACHTA: Plachta.

1 MR. SHERMAN: Okay. Josh, can you state your
2 name and spell it out, please.

3 MR. GRIMM: My name is Josh Grimm, J-O-S-H G-R-
4 I-M-M. And I live here in Haines. I was just going to
5 keep it short and simple and just state that I am
6 interested in the no action alternative, is that what
7 you guys are calling it.

8 MR. SHERMAN: Yes.

9 MR. GRIMM: But I do want to state that I --
10 before I came here, I didn't realize that old growth
11 wasn't considered any higher priority in the
12 conversation or in the data points or anything like
13 that. To me that's just kind of crazy but I don't know.
14 You know it seems like my understanding of old growth
15 is that it's a pretty important -- important element to
16 a healthy ecosystem. I mean even just helping seed
17 other areas, keeping those stands alive and helping
18 wildlife thrive, and to create biodiversity and -- and
19 it seems like it's important to have those stands
20 around as sacred places, as places that shouldn't be
21 touched. There should be no roads going to them.
22 Limited access, I think is a good thing. Our impact on
23 the planet has been pretty substantial and the Tongass
24 seems to be a pretty amazing place that has still some
25 pretty intact ecosystems that make it really special.

1 And I come -- I come from western Pennsylvania and
2 there you can see the -- you know the impacts of
3 industrial civilization and what kind of fragment --
4 fragmentation it does to a healthy place and, you know,
5 the land has been pretty well denuded. And one of the
6 reasons why I left was because, you know, because of
7 the environmental degradation which led to social and
8 economic downturn or even collapse. I think it's
9 pretty important to look at -- you know, and I think
10 that having large scale extraction and just looking at
11 the numbers and not taking into account like social and
12 economic impacts, you know, from what I gather from
13 this meeting, it seems like there's just like the
14 numbers, the numbers is what we're looking at and
15 that's -- obviously there's only like so much you can
16 look at, I mean, but I don't know, I'm just saying
17 that, yeah, take no action.

18 All right, thanks.

19 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you. Next up is Jessica.

20 MS. PLACHTA: Hi.

21 MR. SHERMAN: Just go ahead and state your name
22 and spell it out, please.

23 MS. PLACHTA: Sure. Jessica P-L-A-C-H-T-A.

24 And I will submit written comments as well.

25 I guess I want to start by just expressing my

1 hope that as you travel around Southeast you'll
2 consider that the people that you're hearing from are
3 the people who rely on the Tongass for our food, our
4 air, our water, our livelihood and our future. When
5 you think, you know, about the future of life on Earth,
6 those of us with small children, it's not looking very
7 hopeful for a liveable planet. And so I hope, you
8 know, I know you have a job with an agency and it
9 forces you to operate in boxes and put your abilities
10 in boxes and the things you think about in different
11 boxes, but, I think a lot of the -- the rest of the
12 world is waking up to the fact that our collective
13 house is on fire and they're jumping out of their boxes
14 and they're doing things differently. And I don't --
15 you know, I just want to pose that as -- as -- as,
16 hopefully, an inspiration to you to -- if there's any
17 way that you can jump out of your box and realize our
18 collective house is on fire. Something different is
19 needed from each of us in order to have a liveable
20 planet for our children and grandchildren.

21 So, anyway, I'll continue on to my -- what I
22 wrote down.

23 So I did write this down, citizens and our
24 governments around the world are waking up to the
25 climate crises and realizing if we keep driving this

1 business as usual bus we will literally drive ourselves
2 to extinction and bring everything down with us. With
3 that in mind, I'd like to see the U.S. Forest Service
4 follow the example of the BLM and reassess all its
5 deforestation activities to consider cumulative impacts
6 on the climate crises and biodiversity loss.

7 So failing (ph) that, I'd like to voice my
8 support for the no action alternative, which, at least,
9 does no additional harm.

10 So long story -- I have a life long
11 relationship with reforestation. My dad was a
12 reforester and I spent a lot of time in western states
13 clear-cuts growing up so I know what those -- what
14 those former old growth patches look like after they've
15 -- after they've had the U.S. Forest Service treatment
16 and it's, you know, as a small child I -- I developed a
17 dystopian perspective, perhaps, because of that.
18 Coming into these places, you know, they'd often be on
19 the edge of an old growth patch, so you go and it's
20 just this incredible living organism with, you know,
21 mosses and animals and tracks and this and that and
22 everything just feels vibrant and alive and you step
23 out -- step out to where my dad and his crew were
24 working and it's a moonscape, it's just scarred with
25 massive stumps and everything all just jumbled and

1 dead, like beyond dead. It's -- it's been burned, it's
2 been bulldozed, it's been sprayed with chemicals and
3 it's, you know, got this weird looking brownish stream
4 going through it, and I don't want to see that happen
5 to the Tongass. I know that you have -- you have your
6 dictates and all your different documents, but just on
7 a living organism kind of level, I hope you recognize
8 that your choices -- what you're putting down on paper,
9 is impacting your relatives, you know, it's impacting
10 all living things on Earth. If deforestation continues
11 that pace, if -- if, you know, if we continue to
12 increase carbon in the atmosphere and destroy the
13 biodiversity, the living fabric of the Earth, there is
14 no future for us. And I, you know, I want -- I want
15 everyone who's in the decisionmaking line to just
16 consider that at some point.

17 So, finally, I would like to support the U.S.
18 Forest Service in its commitment to government to
19 government consultation with Alaska Natives, I think
20 that's super important and to not just do lip service
21 to it. It's actually -- there have been a lot of
22 wrongs done by our nation to indigenous nations and
23 that's a huge responsibility for all of us who are here
24 now to try to do what we can in our lifetime to rectify
25 those wrongs. So if you consult with an indigenous

1 nation that says I rely on this place for my
2 livelihood, I hope you can -- if you don't get their
3 consent don't impact that area. Try to make a
4 commitment to -- to that Native nation that is still
5 here despite what's happened, to say, okay, we're going
6 to -- we're going to at least do no harm to that area
7 that you rely on for your -- for your livelihood.

8 So, anyway, thank you so much for taking our
9 testimony. And like I said I'll -- I will also submit
10 written comments.

11 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you.

12 MS. PLACHTA: Yeah, you bet.

13 MR. SHERMAN: Anybody else. Anybody else who
14 would like to fill one of these out and provide
15 testimony. Okay. All right, Nicholas, go ahead and
16 state your name and spell it out, please.

17 MR. SZATKOWSKI: All right, sure. Sure. My
18 name is Nicholas Szatkowski, it's N-I-C-H-O-L-A-S S-Z-
19 A-T-K-O-W-S-K-I.

20 And so I guess just to preface, I think I want
21 to state emphatically I think that you should not
22 remove the Roadless Rule. Alternative 1. I've been
23 involved with the Tongass for approximately 20 years.
24 It's provided economic employment to me, subsistence
25 resources, emotional and psychological sustenance,

1 spiritual and I've engaged with the entire Tongass from
2 the Tongass Narrows, Portand Canal, every major island
3 all the way to the Lynn Canal, and I think it's pretty
4 clear that old growth temperate rain Forest is one of
5 the most valuable bioms left on the planet Earth. Most
6 of the planet Earth has already been disrupted by
7 industrial society. We don't even have remnants of the
8 full spread of species that used to exist in most of
9 the bioms that industrial has operated in. We're very,
10 very lucky that there's so much still wild, or health
11 landscape in the Tongass. And I think that it's tragic
12 that our society still seems bent on trying to alter it
13 for a tiny, tiny amount of presumed economic gain.
14 And, as has been pointed out in the meeting earlier, it
15 isn't even an economic gain, it's actually,
16 unfortunately that administratively, the United States
17 Forest Service was operating on this notion of somehow
18 changing the Earth into a commodity for monetary gain
19 and they -- there was a belief from the Twentieth
20 Century that it was necessary to go out and change the
21 land around us, to turn it into something that we could
22 turn into money, and I think it's become quite clear in
23 the modern world, that's not a good way to operate.
24 And we're starting to see some of those effects of
25 those mounting. We're having a true crises on the

1 planet with the loss of biodiversity. And, again,
2 temperate old growth Forest is one of the greatest
3 storehouses of biodiversity. It also is the greatest
4 carbonsynch of any biom on the planet. And the
5 environmental impact statement gave no recognition of
6 that fact at all. The idea that somehow harvesting
7 timber out of a roaded area, building new roads, or
8 what kind of area you're disrupting, but that's not
9 accounted for in the EIS is -- frankly, it's kind of
10 ridiculous. It's hard to take the document seriously,
11 you know. I put a lot of my life energy into these
12 very issues. I put a lot of my attention on what's
13 happening in old growth Forest and then to see this
14 document, all these hundreds of pages and all this
15 effort and it just doesn't even address that. It just
16 -- it's -- it makes it, appear to me, that it has less
17 to do with how to manage all of the resources and all
18 of the interests that are there, in a place like the
19 Tongass, and it's more about kind of a covert
20 socialism, there is an underwriting of this very, very
21 small number of timber jobs and it's getting
22 underwritten to the tune of millions of dollars, it's
23 not in the public interest. It's not -- we don't have
24 an enormous number of -- there's probably more people
25 employed as dishwashers in Southeast Alaska than there

1 are in the timber industry and, yet, we're going to
2 devote the majority of the entire landscape -- is
3 managed so as to try to facilitate this tiny number of
4 timber jobs. Those timber jobs, you know, we have this
5 sort of cultural mythology that that somehow was this
6 great and honorable thing to be a lumberjack and the
7 personal, moral character of those people might have
8 been great, I don't -- I mean, you know, that's a
9 different issue, but the idea of going out and chopping
10 the Forest down, that that's somehow a moral positive
11 thing, it's just an outdated idea, it wasn't really
12 accurate and we don't need to be doing that anymore.

13 So in terms of biodiversity, in terms of
14 special -- in carbon sequestration and the carbonsynch
15 that's already there, I think it's abundantly clear
16 that the -- really, even the existing -- even with the
17 no action alternative, really actually there's still
18 some more distance to travel, we really need to
19 completely end all old growth logging on the Tongass,
20 period.

21 There are -- I do know that there are some ways
22 you can do second growth logging, if you do it in a
23 sustainable way that's careful, that doesn't disrupt
24 the soil, there are ways to do that and provide some
25 amount of timber, probably in an amount that would be

1 just about right for the use of the people that live in
2 Southeast Alaska. The idea of -- of exporting it
3 elsewhere in the world, that just doesn't make sense.
4 Instead the whole world should be looking at the
5 Tongass as -- as like a -- a cathedral of biodiversity.
6 And people talk about the Amazon that way, they talk
7 about other parts of the world that have been
8 celebrated, the Tongass just hasn't gotten, I think,
9 enough recognition, to uphold it in that way. And so,
10 I think that's -- yeah, I guess that's all I need to
11 say right now. Anyway, thanks.

12 MR. SHERMAN: All right, thank you.

13 MR. SZATKOWSKI: Yeah.

14 MR. SHERMAN: Any -- anybody else.

15 (No comments)

16 MR. SHERMAN: Is there anybody I might have
17 inadvertently missed.

18 (No comments)

19 MR. SHERMAN: Well, why don't we just go for a
20 pause for 15 minutes and we'll see if anybody else
21 wants to testify.

22 (Off record)

23 (END OF RECORDING)

24

25

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1 TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE

2 I, Salena A. Hile, hereby certify that the
3 foregoing pages numbered 02 through 23 are a true,
4 accurate, and complete transcript of ANILCA PUBLIC
5 HEARING, HAINES, ALASKA transcribed under my direction
6 from a copy of an electronic sound recording to the
7 best of our knowledge and ability.

8

9

DATE _____

SALENA A. HILE, (Transcriber)

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